

"Monsters in the Basement"

by Bob Risher

On a Monday morning in March, Josiah Hawkins awoke to the sound of chirping birds, the sun on his face, and the annoying buzz of his alarm clock. It was the start of a normal day, but Josiah felt anything but normal.

He had barely slept the night before. This was the day he had been looking forward to, and dreading, since he first saw the poster tacked to a hallway at school.

Mom had already left to work, so Josiah fixed a simple breakfast of cereal and some mixed fruit before hustling to catch the school bus on Elmore Drive in his neighborhood.

Josiah's classes that day went by in a whirl. It seemed as though the clock was running twice as fast as usual. Every minute brought him closer to 3:15 and the meeting he would go to in the school auditorium. Dodging crowds of students as he rushed to his final class, he passed the poster again and stopped to read it once more:

AUDITIONS FOR "MONSTERS IN THE BASEMENT"

a play by Dave Evans

Ian and his rock band, "The Monsters" practice in his parents' basement and record CDs that they send to record companies. Will they ever get a chance at music stardom .. or is it just an impossible dream? The story takes an unexpected turn when a mysterious new student asks to join the band.

Male and female roles available. Musical ability is a plus, but not necessary. Auditions will be held in the school auditorium at 3:15 p.m., Monday, March 2nd.

Josiah had never acted in a play before, but he had been playing drums since he was 9 years old and he longed to be in a group. He took one last glance at the poster and headed off for his final class of the day.

One hour later, Josiah walked through the large double doors of the auditorium and saw more than thirty students talking excitedly. A few

held musical instruments, but most just wandered around, laughing and joking with friends. Everyone was nervous, but nearly all tried to hide it.

Soon, Mr. Perez, the director of the play, appeared and asked everyone to sit. "Thanks for coming to the auditions for Monsters in the Basement'," he said. Mr. Perez passed a clipboard to the nearest student and asked everyone to sign their name to the attached paper.

After everyone had finished, Mr. Perez began calling names one at a time and each student stepped forward to receive a few pages of the play and read one of the character's lines out loud. Mr. Perez often gave students a few suggestions and then asked them to read again.

Josiah squirmed in a chair in the huge auditorium, waiting for his name to be called. Everyone else looked calm and confident. Josiah's heart thumped. He felt like jumping up and running away until he couldn't run any more. But he sat still.

"Josiah Hawkins," called Mr. Perez.

At dinner that night, Josiah told his mom all about the auditions. "My voice shook a little when I was reading the part in front of everyone, but I think I did all right," he said. "Mr. Perez said I was good, anyway."

Josiah's mom was excited. "At least you overcame your fear," she said. "It's not easy to try new things, but you had the confidence to go through with it. I'm proud of you and I'm sorry you didn't get the part."

"That's okay. At least I'm still going to be involved in the play," he said. Mr. Perez asked me to help design the basement set where most of the play takes place."

"Do you have any ideas yet?" his mother asked.

"No," Josiah said. "But how hard can it be?"

Josiah was full of confidence. He grabbed his basketball and ran out the door.

The day before the play, he sat alone in the front row of the auditorium. "How am I going to do this?" he wondered nervously. "I know what my basement looks like, but what does this one look like?"

Josiah looked at the paper in his hand. "The director gave me this list of phrases," he thought, "but it doesn't mention furniture or anything. I guess it's no use. I just don't see what to do."